

A SYNOPSIS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AS COMPARED TO OTHER LATTER DAY SAINT CHURCHES



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A Synopsis of the Church of Christ Beliefs and Practices as Compared to Other Latter Day Saint Churches

During the lifetime of the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., the church he founded by the direction of God underwent many changes which proved to be a factor in the division which occurred after his death in 1844. It is argued that the church is subject to change because of growth and changing times. This is only partially true. The basic and ultimate requirements must remain inflexible, or else the statement—"I am the Lord, I change not"—is found to be false (see Malachi 3:6, Utah D&C 20:17, RLDS D&C 17:4). So, also, when Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it", we see the timeless, unchanging character of that church.

From the earliest days of the restoration of the "fullness of the gospel" (1 Nephi 10:14, Utah Book of Mormon), we have told the world that this included a restoration of divine priesthood authority, and by which the true Church of Christ would be restored as in the time of Christ and the ancient apostles. This was, in fact, the intent of God as revealed in the Book of Commandments 4:5, in March 1829:

"And thus if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will put down all lyings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts...and I will establish my church, like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old."

This is deleted from all books of Doctrine and Covenants, which was first published in 1835, two years after publication of the Book of Commandments! By this time, the church's name was changed, which church was organized according to, or, "by the will and commandments of God", and into this same section (Utah D&C 20; RLDS D&C 17) was introduced a first presidency, high priest, etc. The Book of Commandments, chapter 24 (this same revelation), does not contain these offices. Many changes were made in the revelations to support offices not originally provided for, and these were introduced by men—not God! All comparison to the divine pattern should be with the New Testament of the Bible and with the Book of Mormon after Christ had come to the American continent. The same is true of doctrinal points.

With these thoughts in mind, note the following comparison

	Church of Christ	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
First Presidency.....	No.....	Yes.....	Yes
High Priests.....	No.....	Yes.....	Yes
Patriarchs	No.....	Yes.....	Yes
12 Apostles at the head.....	Yes.....	No.....	No
A prophet at the head	No.....	Yes.....	Yes
Prophets	Yes.....	Yes.....	Yes
Church name as of 1830.....	Yes.....	No.....	No
Bible.....	Yes.....	Yes.....	Yes
Book of Mormon.....	Yes.....	Yes.....	Yes
Book of Commandments.....	*	No.....	No
Doctrine and Covenants.....	*	Yes.....	Yes
Pearl of Great Price.....	No.....	Yes.....	No
Baptism	Yes.....	Yes.....	Yes
Baptism for the dead.....	No.....	Yes.....	No
Celestial Marriage	No.....	Yes.....	No
Polygamy.....	No.....	Yes†.....	No
Man to become a God.....	No.....	Yes.....	No
Cod, once a man.....	No.....	Yes.....	No
Temple in Zion (Independence, MO)	Yes.....	Yes.....	Yes
Other temples (except at Jerusalem) ...	No.....	Yes.....	Kirtland

*Joseph Smith gave many revelations, but not all were divine. All revelation must be in harmony with the Bible and Book of Mormon, the only safe standards. See Isaiah 8:20 and Ezekiel 37:19—only two “sticks” or “books” of scripture.

†Utah D&C provides for plural marriages, but the practice was since declared illegal by President Woodruff.

The Church of Christ is a remnant of the original church of 1830, being neither disorganized nor reorganized. Its priesthood may be traced back, intact, to Joseph Smith and the angel. Early church innovations were accepted for a time, but we later repudiated them, reverting to the scriptural pattern in organization and doctrine. As the Bible and Book of Mormon were said to contain the fullness of the gospel, a fullness will admit of no new doctrine nor priesthood office. See D&C, Utah ed. 42:12,59; RLDS ed. 42:5,16.